United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in letter to Security Council, says UNAMIR is no closer to attaining authorized strength than in May; faults Governments for reluctance to commit resources; appeals urgently for reinforcements.

+ UNPROFOR rebuffs Bosnian Serb attempts to remove weapons from sites in Sarajevo exclusion zone; heavy fighting reported elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Member States owe United Nations $3.37 billion as of 31 July; $835 million owed to regular budget and $2.54 billion to peace-keeping.

+ Mission dispatched by Secretary-General to review UNOSOM II troop strength completes work.

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The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) is still as far from attaining its authorized strength of 5,500 troops as it was when the Security Council adopted resolution 918 (1994) more than two months ago, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a letter to the Council dated 1 August, he said the need for reinforcements for UNAMIR remained urgent. He faulted Governments for their reluctance to supply the necessary resources, noting that the Council had twice urged them to respond urgently to appeals on behalf of UNAMIR.

Although several Governments had responded positively to those appeals, their offers had been conditional and had entailed complicated efforts to match troops and equipment, the Secretary-General continued. While the appalling events in Rwanda were a strong disincentive to involvement, hesitations and delays had contributed to the catastrophe. UNAMIR now had to establish safe conditions for the return of refugees, and would also be responsible for ensuring stability within Rwanda, especially along the northwestern border with Zaire where disturbances could not be ruled out.

The Secretary-General appealed in the strongest terms for reinforcements for UNAMIR. Governments with fully equpped units at their disposal might make

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them available temporarily until contingents that had been offered were properly equipped and deployed. He expressed the hope that the Mission could cope with the changed situation in Rwanda with its authorized strength, but said additional resources might be needed. However, the troop level would be reduced as and when circumstances permitted

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Bosnian Serb forces today made two attempts to remove heavy weapons from sites in the Sarajevo exclusion zone, but were successfully resisted by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) without the use of force, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The attempts were made amid heavy fighting in various locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Government exchanged 1,000 artillery rounds in northern Bosnia, the spokesman said. The Bosnian Serbs claimed that they were responding to a Government offensive, but were responsible for most of the shelling. In addition, 12 rounds hit Tuzla, causing five civilian casualties. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Government's Fifth Corps took the town of Pecigrad, which lies behind the internal confrontation line, and accepted the surrender of up to 500 Bosnian Muslim soldiers loyal to the breakaway leader Fikret Abdic.

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As of 31 July, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $3.37 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $835 million was for assessments for the regular budget and $2.54 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed $531 million to the regular budget and $956 million to the peace-keeping budget, while the Russian Federation owed some $601 million in peace-keeping contributions.

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The mission dispatched by the Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to review the troop strength of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) has completed its work and will leave the country today, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The mission met with the Force Commander and the Special Representative for Somalia, and held consultations with humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations regarding their security needs.

The mission, which was led by Major-General Timothy Dibuama, was expected to submit recommendations on UNOSOM II's troop strength to the Secretary-General on arrival in New York.

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